

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 04623 111555Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SES-02 SAA-01 /092 W
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R 111518Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9174
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4623

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, PLO
SUBJ: PLO RECONSIDERS 242

1. SUMMARY: ARAFAT LEADING PLO TO RECONSIDER ITS NEGATIVE
POSITION ON RECOGNITION OF UNSC RESOLUTION 242 WITH RESERVATIONS
BUT DOES NOT HAVE VOTES YET TO PUSH THROUGH A POLICY CHANGE.
CHANGE WOULD ULTIMATELY HAVE TO GO THROUGH NPC WHICH IS NOT
LIKELY TO MEET FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. MOHAMMAD NASHASHIBI, INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF PLO
EXCOM, TOLD AUSTRALIAN EMBOFF AUGUST 8 THAT, DURING RECENT
MEETING OF EXCOM, ARAFAT HAD ONCE AGAIN RAISED QUESTION
OF PLO'S RECONGNIZING UNSC RESOLUTION 242 WITH RESERVATIONS.
HAVING BEEN UNDER IMPRESSION THAT PRESIDENT SADAT WOULD
SHORTLY ANNOUNCE FAILURE OF HIS INITIATIVE. ARAFAT WANTED
TO POSITION PLO FOR SUBSEQUENT PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA.
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PAGE 02 DAMASC 04623 111555Z

NASHASHIBI SAID QUESTION OF RECOGNIZING 242 HAD BEEN
SERIOUSLY DEBATED BY EXCOM BUT THAT ARAFAT DID NOT HAVE
THE VOTES TO PUSH THROUGH THIS CHANGE IN POLICY.

3. NASHASHIBI CLAIMED THAT ARAFAT COULD TAKE ISSUE TO
PNC WHERE HE HAS THE NECESSARY VOTES FROM FATAH MEMBERS
TO IMPOSE HIS WILL. HOWEVER, ARAFAT DID NOT WANT SUCH

A MAJOR POLICY DECISION BASED SOLELY ON FATAH VOTES. ARAFAT CAME UNDER ATTACK BY HIS EXCOM COLLEAGUES FOR HIS RECENT DICTATORIAL STYLE OF LEADERSHIP AND SPECIFICALLY FOR NOT RECOGNIZING THE TRIPOLI "STEADFASTNESS" DECLARATION. ARAFAT COUNTERED THAT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS STATEMENT AS POLICY UNTIL THE PNC ENDORSED IT. NASHASHIBI SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE PNC WOULD NOT MEET THIS SUMMER AND HE DOUBTED IT WOULD ASSEMBLY BEFORE NEXT YEAR. ARAFAT DOES NOT WANT A PNC MEETING BEFORE THE SADAT INITIATIVE IS PLAYED OUT AND ARAB UNITY IS RESTORED FOR FEAR IT COULD BE MANIPULATED TO ENDORSE A REJECTIONIST POLICE.

4. NASHASHIBI ADDED THAT THE EXCOM IS UNANIMOUS IN OPPOSING THE CURRENT ANTI-FATAH IRAQI POLICY WHICH IS BEING IMPLEMENTED BY ABU NIDAL. IRAQ'S ACTIVITIES ARE STRENGTHENING ARAFAT'S HAND WITHIN THE PLO BY FORCING THOSE WHO HAD OPPOSED HIS AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO SUPPORT HIM IN THE FACE OF THIS EXTERNAL (IRAQI) THREAT. NASHASHIBI HAD HIMSELF JUST RETURNED FROM IRAQ AND SAID EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE WITH IRAQ. HE EXPECTED POSITIVE RESULTS WITHIN NEXT FIFTEEN DAYS.

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